



**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING: June 26, 2008**

PHA Conference Room

100 Broad Street

Providence, RI 02903

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Waldman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The Executive Director called the roll:

Present

Paul Waldman
Dolores Cascella
Barbara Fields
JT. Taylor
Robert Clarkin
Dorothy Waters
Nicholas Narducci
Hillary Silver

Absent

John Iglizzi (Excused)
Jaime Castillo (Excused)
Raymond Murphy

Eight members were present, constituting a quorum.

RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

There were no comments from residents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (April 24, 2008)

Chairman Waldman called for approval of the April 24th meeting minutes. Commissioner Waters moved approval of the minutes. Commissioner Clarkin seconded the motion. A vote was taken. There being no opposition, Chairman Waldman declared the minutes approved.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

General Comments

The Chairman welcomed Commissioner Cascella back after her absence for medical reasons. He stated that she is a valuable member of the board. He also stated that he and Commissioner Clarkin have been working on revising the Board By-laws and correcting some anomalies between the by-laws and the board policies, especially the sections relating to attendance and proxy voting. He asked that the other commissioners review the current bylaws and suggest changes and updates at the next meeting in July. Mark Ouellet, board council, will also review the bylaws to confirm that they are in accordance with Rhode Island general laws.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget, Finance & Audit Committee

There is no report this month due to the budget presentation later in the meeting.

Asset Management/Capital Improvements Committee

Commissioner Narducci presented the report to be entered into the record. [See the attached report.]

Commissioner Silver asked if all of the capital improvement projects were being done by PHA staff. The Executive Director stated that some of the projects are being completed by staff and some by contractors, and that he would present a report with more detail later in the meeting. The monthly management report also lists the details about all ongoing projects.

Resident Services Committee

Talitha VanDenBerghe, Special Projects Officer, presented the report to be entered into the record. [See the attached report.]

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Monthly Management Report

The Executive Director directed the board to review the Monthly Management Report for detailed information about the PHA's operations. He invited the commissioners to call him if they had any questions about the report.

Attention to Articles in Board Packet

Each month one or more articles related to public housing will be included in each Commissioner's packet in order to provide Commissioners with information on housing issues. This month's packet includes the following:

- Article from the Providence Journal about the Hartford Park demolition, and the PHA history book.
- Article from the Providence Business News about Senator Reed announcing that the Housing Authority will receive \$266,713 in federal funds to secure permanent supportive housing for veterans.
- Article from the Washington Post about the public housing crisis.
- Article from the New York Times about the New York City Housing Authority raising rents, and eliminating community centers and resident programs due to reduced federal funding.
- A New York Times article about the impact of closing the New York Housing Authority community centers.
- An article about the Chicago Housing Authority lottery for their Section 8 voucher list.

Presentation of Awards of Appreciation

The first award was presented by Chairman Waldman and the Executive Director to Marcia Sullivan, who recently left the PHA to become the Executive Director of the East Greenwich Housing Authority. The director stated we hated to see her leave, but we are proud of her success and wish her the best of luck. Marcia was initially hired as a temporary Special Assistant in September 1990, promoted to Special Assistant/Planner in February 1991, promoted to Director of Special Projects in February 1996, and finally promoted to Director of Resident Services in July 2001. She turned our Resident Services department into a first class organization, and we appreciate the good work that she did for us.

Two Awards were presented to board members in recognition for their 10 years of service as Commissioners.

Commissioner Dolores Cascella was appointed to the board by the Mayor in August 1997, and was appointed Second Vice Chair in October 2006. Chairman Waldman and the Executive Director presented her with a plaque in appreciation of her 10 years of service.

Commissioner Dorothy Waters was appointed to the board by the Mayor in August 1997, and Chairman Waldman and the Executive Director presented her with a plaque in appreciation of her 10 years of service.

Presentation of FY 2009 Annual Operating Budgets

The Executive Director presented the FY 2009 operating budget to the board. He explained that we now have 10 budgets, one for each Asset Management Project (AMP) and one for the Central Office Cost Center (COCC). Each AMP is a development, or in some cases, more than one development.

The COCC is for the central office, which no longer receives a subsidy, only the fees that are charged to each AMP. The combined budgets estimate \$20,871,292 in operating income (\$11,814,334 is provided by the HUD operating subsidy) and operating expenses totaling \$20,291,000. The budget figures are based on an estimated 82% of our full HUD operating subsidy. A surplus of slightly over \$9 million is projected for the AMPs and \$1.5 million for the COCC. However, the COCC only receives fees from the AMPs if they are making a profit, so some of the surplus may go back to the AMPs. The COCC is responsible for all terminal leave payments and long term liabilities. The Executive Director's budget presentation included reviewing each page of the budget document with the commissioners.

The Executive Director stated that there will be no cost of living raise for the employees at this time. A six month extension has been requested on all union contracts, and the situation will be reviewed again at that time. If the reserve is adequate we may offer cost of living raises at a later date. There is only a small increase in health care costs. Delta Dental has gone up, but our costs for Blue Cross have gone down slightly due to an increase in deductibles.

Commissioner Silver asked if the 4% increase in utilities is realistic. The Executive Director stated that it is because of the savings we will realize from the Energy Performance Contract. Also, if we had not converted to gas over the years we would be in a very difficult situation now.

Commissioner Fields complimented the Executive Director on the budget preparation, and asked what items would be a concern for this year. The Executive Director stated that the cost of utilities, security problems pertaining to gangs, maintaining adequate staffing, and the uncertainty of the exact amount of our HUD subsidy are the items that we are most concerned about for FY 2009.

The Executive Director stated that Representative Sires of New Jersey has sent a letter to the House Appropriations Committee, along with other legislators who have signed on including Representative Langevin, asking that next year's appropriation include full funding for the public housing operating subsidy and capital funds. Representative Kennedy is on the committee and is expected to support the initiative also. Regardless of who becomes President next year, we expect an increase in funding over what we have received the last few years.

Commissioner Silver asked if there would be layoffs this year. The Executive Director stated that if we receive 82% or more of our HUD subsidy we will not need to lay off any more employees.

Section 8 Budget FY2009

The Executive Director also presented the FY 2009 Section 8 budget, which is formula-based from HUD. \$14 million dollars in housing assistance payments (HAP) will go out to private property landlords to house over 2,100 families. We anticipate a surplus of at least \$30,581. These surplus funds can no longer be used by the PHA as general funds, they must be used for Section 8 purposes only.

Youth Programs

The Executive Director stated that we have created some very good relationships with third parties since our youth programs have been closed down due to a lack of federal funding. We are negotiating with Providence College to take over the Chad/Ad Recreation Center and use it as a learning laboratory for their public service program students. Dr. Sickinger, who is the head of the program, is strongly in favor of it as are some of his colleagues, and they will be meeting with the PC President shortly. We hope for them to take over in the fall. If that does not work out, we will talk with the Boys & Girls Club of RI who have already offered to pick up kids this summer from Coddington Court, Roger Williams, Chad Brown, Admiral Terrace, Hartford Park and Manton Heights and bring them to their centers for five hours a day of supervised recreation in their pool, game rooms and gym. They charge \$18 a year which most families can afford, and we will cover the cost for families that can not afford it. In the fall the Boys & Girls Club will also have an active presence at the recreation center at Coddington Court. We are continuing to work with the Providence After School Alliance at Hartford Park

and Manton Heights. This summer our youth sports coordinator, who was brought back on a contract basis with some Weed & Seed funds, is running a youth camp at Merino Park for five or six weeks.

Councilman Narducci announced that the soccer field across from Chad Brown has been renovated with grant money from the parks department and some funds from the Mayor's office. A new irrigation system, bleachers, and trees have been installed, and a new playground will soon be added for the younger children. A youth soccer league will be offered for the summer, for three or more days a week. Over 40 kids have already signed up.

[See the attached reports.]

Capital Fund Financing Program Status Report

The Executive Director stated that Marv Carmody, Director of Asset Management had prepared a status report for the Capital Fund Financing Program projects. Some of the projects have already begun and others will start this summer. [See the attached report.]

Energy Performance Contract Status Report

The Executive Director stated that Ameresco Company prepares a weekly report on the status of the Energy Performance Contract projects, including a six page schedule of all of the activity that will take place over the next 22 months. One example of the projects that are in progress is the replacement of our large boilers with 190 smaller, more energy efficient boilers throughout the developments. The Ameresco project managers meet once a week with the PHA project managers to keep us updated on the status of all the projects. [See the attached report.]

Strategic Plan Update

The Executive Director distributed a list of the key strategic issues identified during the strategic planning process over the past nine months. The final strategic plan will be presented to the board at next month's meeting. [See the attached report.]

HUD 504 & FH/EEO (HUD Findings)

HUD conducted the review of our buildings and policies to determine compliance with 504 and FH/EEO regulations. The Executive Director stated that the process was less exacting than we had anticipated, and the inspectors were here for less than a day. Per their findings we will have to complete a language needs study to determine the languages our residents and applicants may need translation for. We already have a clear understanding of these needs, but HUD requires this formal process. HUD does want us to have 5% handicapped units, and we have slightly less, but we have always been able to supply a handicapped unit when needed, and some of our handicapped units are being used by people who do not have a handicap. HUD believes this is due to a lack of outreach, and although we disagree, we will create a new outreach program for people with physical disabilities and a plan to convert more units to handicapped. HUD expects us to reach the full 5% of handicapped units within five years, but the process is very expensive and we will probably ask them to extend the deadline.

RESOLUTION(S)

Resolution #4165

Resolution #4165 authorizes Board acceptance of the FY 2009 Annual Operating Budget. Commissioner Silver moved approval with Commissioner Taylor seconding the motion. A vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Waldman declared the resolution passed.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Cascella thanked the board for the flowers she received during her medical absence.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Waldman accepted a motion to adjourn from Commissioner Narducci, which was seconded by Commissioner Clarkin, to adjourn the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Beth Herosy
Recording Secretary

Stephen J. O'Rourke
Executive Director